



The Stringent Criteria of the Zaydiyya for Accepting Hadith

- 1. Contradicting the Qur'ân**—The Zaydis wholly reject any narrated report that clearly contradicts the Book of Allah. This is because the Qur'ân itself says: **{Falsehood cannot approach it from the front and from behind. It is revealed by One All-Wise and Praiseworthy}** (Q. 41:42). Also, there is a reported hadîth in which the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny, said: ((I will be lied upon just as the prophets before me. Whatever comes to you on my authority, place it against the Book of Allah. If it agrees with it, it is from me and I said it; if not, it is not from me and I didn't say it)). For this reason, our imams and scholars reject reports that clearly counter the Qur'ân.
- 2. Collective-transmitted reports (tawâtur)**—These reports are those that have been reported by a large number of different narrators insomuch that there can be no doubt regarding its authenticity. This is the reason why many of the early imams of Ahl al-Bayt related hadîths without relating their chains of narration. This is because these narrations have been mass-transmitted by all Muslims in such large numbers that their authenticity is established.
- 3. The acceptance of the imams**—With this principle, a hadîth is accepted if the imams of Ahl al-Bayt agree upon its authenticity. Imam al-Manṣûr Billah al-Qâsim bin Muhammad, upon him be peace, said: *"We do not know of any truthful hadîth on his [i.e. the Prophet's] authority except that it is collectively transmitted, mutually agreed upon by the imams, and/or agrees with the Book of Allah. Otherwise, we can not guarantee if it is a lie upon the Messenger of Allah—whether deliberate or mistakenly."*
- 4. Preference for the narrations of Ahl al-Bayt**—Those reports that are narrated by Ahl al-Bayt are given preference over those narrated by other than them. This is because of their elevated status in the Qur'ân [e.g. the Verse of Purification Q. 33:33] and the Prophetic hadîths [e.g. the Hadîth of Two Weighty Things].
- 5. Those mursal narrations of the imams**—A mursal narration is a report whose chain does not go to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny, through a Companion; rather, it reaches a sub-narrator who ascribes it to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny. The majority of jurists accept mursal traditions as authentic. The mursal traditions on the authority of an imam are considered authentic by the Zaydis because one of the necessary attributes of an imam is uprightness (*'adl*). Therefore, any hadîth the imam narrates is considered authentic, even if a Companion is missing.

6. **The chain of narrators should be free of criticism and the text should be free from impossibilities**—Those narrators in the chain must be free from valid criticism and the text of the report must be consistent, non-contradictory, or free from things like anachronisms.
7. **Reliability of the narrator**—The narrator must be upright and not guilty of open disobedience and major sins.
8. **Those reports of the opponents that the Zaydis use as a proof**—The Zaydis also consider the reports of the opponents which agree with their doctrines. For example, Imam Ahmed bin Sulaymân, upon him be peace, compiled a book of hadîths called *Usûl al-Ahkâm* in which he narrated numerous hadîths of their opponents that he used as a proof for Zaydi jurisprudence.
9. **Enemies of Ahl al-Bayt**—Those narrators who showed enmity and hatred towards the Ahl al-Bayt in their lifetimes and afterwards are not considered reliable narrators—even if they were amongst the Companions. For example, the narrations on the authority of Companions like Wâ'il bin Hujr, Jarîr bin 'Abdullah, and Marwan bin Hakam are not considered reliable.